

Parma, Brooklyn stormwater issues examined by Chinese officials



Big Creek Connects Executive Director Bob Gardin, left, and Cleveland Metroparks Jennifer Grieser gave five Chinese officials a tour of the Fern Hill Stormwater Wetland July 26. *(Mark Holan/special to cleveland.com)*

By Mark Holan/special to cleveland.com Posted Jul 31, 2017

PARMA, Ohio - Countries sharing information and knowledge of common environmental problems is essential to promoting world peace.

On July 26, five delegates from the People's Republic of China toured the Fern Hill Stormwater Wetlands Project through the Cleveland Council on World Affairs on a U.S. Department of State sponsored program entitled "Environmental Issues at the Municipal Level in the U.S."

There were two interpreters from the Office of Language Service, U.S. Department of State, helping with communications.

The program is administered through the International Visitor Leadership Program, which welcomes 5,000 emerging leaders to the United States each year for professional exchanges and boasts 350-plus current and former heads of state as alumni.

Big Creek Connects Executive Director Bob Gardin and Cleveland Metroparks Jennifer Grieser, senior natural resource manager, gave the tour to show how the Fern Hill Stormwater Treatment Wetland created a wetland area for the purposes of stormwater treatment and water quality assurance.

"We were honored that the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, the U.S. State Department and our Chinese guests chose the Fern Hill Stormwater Treatment Wetland project to learn how Big Creek Connects, Cleveland Metroparks and the City of Parma collaborated to create this project," Gardin said. "If there are locals that have not yet seen this project, I encourage them to take the time to visit the Fern Hill wetland. It's a great way to learn about our watersheds and stormwater management."

According to the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, this particular program on the environment invites a group of Chinese government officials, nonprofit professionals and academic experts to cities throughout the U.S. to explore how biodiversity and sustainability are encouraged in this country and to explore municipal efforts to address climate change, pollution, and responsible development.

"Touring with our guests from China at the Fern Hill stormwater wetland gave me the opportunity to hear about similar efforts in places like Shanghai," said Grieser. "The visitors described public engagement through volunteer activities and wanted to hear more about our Watershed Volunteer Program."